

Amendments To the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1-20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) In an automation network comprising a plurality of devices, a method for replacing a first drive device connected to a first node involving identifying an order of devices in the network, wherein the network contains a number of nodes, and wherein each of the nodes has a number of connections for interconnecting the nodes and the devices, the method comprising:

providing a second device with data memory or storage in which a relationship or order of the drive device with respect to at least the second device is stored;

replacing the first drive device with a replacement drive device by connecting the replacement drive device to the first node;

operating the replacement drive device to identify a the first node of the nodes to which the replacement drive it is assigned and to identify other devices including the second device;

operating the replacement drive device to receive information from the second device wherein, with information received from the second device, enabling the replacement drive device to ascertain: determines (i) the number of connections of the first node and (ii) a predefined hierarchy of the connections and (iii) the connection with which the replacement drive device is connected to the first node and, to determine and (iv) for the first node, other connections which are connected to other nodes or others of the plurality of devices; and

establishing a relationship between the devices in the network, on the basis of the connection hierarchy predefined for the first node, and of the determined other connections which are connected to the devices or other ones of the nodes as determined by the replacement drive device.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21 executed by each of the devices.

23. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein by the step of establishing a relationship includes determination of a first of said other devices another device is established as an upstream neighbor and a second of said other another devices is established as a downstream neighbor for each of the replacement drive devices.

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein each step of the method is repeated periodically.

25. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein the recited steps are repeated whenever any one of said other devices is no longer connected to the network.

26. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the recited steps are repeated whenever a new device is connected to the network.

27. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein the recited steps are repeated whenever any one of said other devices is replaced by a new device.

28-30. (canceled)

31. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein determination of connections between the first node and the other nodes is performed with by the MAC addresses.

32. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the step of establishing a relationship includes determining IP addresses of the other devices.

33. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the method is executed by a computer program product.

34 - 37. (canceled)

38. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, applied to an automation system containing controls, operator units, drives and actuators as the devices.

39. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein the network is an Ethernet containing personal computers or peripherals as the devices.

40. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, applied to a network installed in a rail transport system containing traction vehicles and cars as the devices.

41. (currently amended) In a ~~an~~ reconfigurable network comprising a plurality of devices, a method for identifying an order of devices in the network thereby enabling determination of relative spatial arrangements among the devices, wherein the network contains a number of nodes, and wherein each of the nodes has a number of connections for interconnecting the nodes and the devices, the method comprising:

configuring the network according to a first hierarchical arrangement of the connections which establishes thereby establishing relationships among the nodes determinative of the relative spatial arrangements among the devices;

a first of the devices performing a series of determinations including:

determining a first of the nodes to which it is assigned,

determining other devices upstream or downstream from the first device,

determining the number of connections of the first node, the first hierarchical arrangement of the connections and nodes, and the connection with which the device is connected to the first node, and

determining for the first node other connections which are connected to other nodes or devices,

the first device thereby acquiring by the first device, in accord with the first hierarchical arrangement, relationships among nodes and connections to which other devices are connected.

42. (currently amended) The method of claim 41 or 42 wherein the network comprises a plurality of computer devices each positioned on a vehicle or car in a transport arrangement.